

Abusive supervision and task performance: The moderating role of feedback seeking behavior*

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I. Introduction

From the beginning of the discipline for organizational behavior, researchers and practitioners have been trying to investigate the positive characteristics of good leaders and its effects. However, within the past more than 10 years, they have changed their attention to another literature that the 'dark side' of leadership such as sexual harassment, physical violence, and nonphysical hostility (Tepper, 2000, 2007). Researchers suggested that the most common type of destructive supervisor behavior involves nonphysical actions (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994) and have used several different terms to refer to these behaviors. For example, researchers use the concept of petty tyranny

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(Ashforth, 1997), supervisor aggression (Schat, Desmarais, & Kelloway, 2006), and supervisor undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), but most of the studies have utilized the term abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000).

Turned attention is also connected to researchers' interest in individuals' psychological well-being at their workplace and the detriment of psychological well-being. In particular, in the organizational behavior literature, the poor relationship between supervisor and their subordinates has been regarded as a source of stress arousal. Perceived abuse from supervisor means a workplace stressor that affects subordinates, increasing the likelihood of psychological strain that hampers subordinate's psychological well-being (Aryee, Sun, Chen, & Debrah, 2008; Tepper, 2000). Some reasons for changed literature interest include the appearance of bad type of behaviors is steadily rising in the workplace (Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Griffin & Lopez, 2005) and their impact on individual and organizational outcome. Especially, 'dark side' of leader's behaviors have been shown to have its negative effects (Aryee, et al., 2008; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007; Tepper, 2000).

We examined the association between one of the negative behavior of managerial employees, abusive supervision and their lower-level employees' performance. Abusive supervision is defined as "subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' sustained displays of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors" (Tepper, 2000: 178). Leaders have been found to have powerful influence on the workplace attitudes and behaviors of their subordinates, and organizations as a whole regardless of their behavior or attitude type (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May, 2004; Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley & Harvey, 2007). Furthermore, there is a general principle in psychological phenomena that individuals are more susceptible to negative than to positive contextual factor (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002), thus the negative type of supervisor's aspects tend to have greater influence on subordinates' attitudes and behaviors than the positive type of supervisor's aspects. However, there are still much to investigate about

this principle in the leadership literature in which negative, destructive workplace phenomena like abusive supervision, affects others in organizations (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). By examining abusive supervision in this study, we can further understand about employees' behavior in the workplace.

The previous researches on abusive supervision that these leader's behaviors have on a variety of negative impact on subordinate's outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, psychological distress, etc (Duffy, et al., 2002; Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervisors are non-nurturing and contrast sharply with ethical supervisors (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Examples of hostile behaviors are public ridicule, rudeness, aggressive eye contact, breaking promises, inconsiderate actions, and employing the silent treatment (Bies, 2001; Tepper, 2000; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). However, one of important organizational outcomes, subordinate's task performance is not investigated frequently with the negative effect of abusive supervision rather than other type of outcomes. Because performance is very important variable not only itself but also association with leader, researchers have examined the relationship between leadership and performance carefully (Tepper, 2000). The performance rating by supervisors is prominent role in leader's decision making that gives promotion chances to their subordinates and becomes the indicator for employment decisions.

Thus, in the current study we examined the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate's task performance. Furthermore, we believe it is important to look beyond simple main relationships of supervisor abuse and task performance. Some studies has examined the negative effects of abusive supervision and it can be either intensified or minimized by moderating variables (Tepper, 2000). Abuse impoverishes the necessary resources to work or copes with mistreatment, and then leads abused subordinates to conserve their remaining resources and engage in counterproductive work behaviors (Aryee, et al., 2008). To handle abused situation, employees would choose

their behavior strategies as more active or not. In the present research, we focus on the coping role of more active behavior type, especially, employee's feedback seeking behavior. Feedback seeking refers to conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end state (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) and often considered as it gives the positive impact to individual performance. However, we thought active behavior such as feedback seeking from abused subordinates might work differently. We assumed that those who seeking a feedback from supervisor may be more impacted by abusive supervision than the lower level of feedback seekers.

To summarize, the purpose of this study is to investigate the consequences of abusive supervision on subordinate's task performance. Also, we seek the moderating conditions that may alleviate or intensify the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee's outcomes. In the following section, we review the theoretical background and then assume our research hypotheses. Then, we test our hypotheses using a sample of employees in a variety of organizations in South Korea. Results obtained from the present study reveal that the levels of subordinate's feedback seeking behavior moderates the negative influence of abusive supervision on subordinate's task performance. This examination contributes to leadership literature regarding feedback and also gives some practical implications that practitioners should be careful of interacting with their subordinates by additional training to manage at risk of abusive practices.

II. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

1. Conservation of resources and abusive supervision

Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is useful framework

for understanding the stress process. Hobfoll defined psychological stress as a reaction to the threat of loss of resources, the actual loss of resources, and the lack of resource gain after the investment of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). COR theory explains the central mechanisms of how individuals who are struggle to deal with stress will act (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll (1989) said that individuals “strive to retain, protect, and build resources” that consist of valued objects, conditions, personal characteristics, or energies. People try to protect and enhance the self by accumulating their resources and applying them to accommodate, withstand, or overcome threats of resources loss (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, resource surpluses makes individuals to feel positive well-being, while the perceived or actual loss of resources or the situation that investment of resources does not work in the expected way will induce psychological stress.

In recent years, researchers have applied the COR theory to investigate the influence of abusive supervision on subordinate attitude, behaviors, and organizational outcomes (Aryee, et al., 2008; Harris, et al., 2007; Whitman, Halbesleben, & Holmes, 2012). In keeping with previous studies, stressors could be considered as “stimuli that evoke the stress process” (Lepine, Podsakoff, & Lepine, 2005, p.764). Given the aversive nature of abusive supervision and its demonstrated effects on employee attitudes, researchers have suggested that abusive supervision is interpreted as negative stressor (Aquino & Thau, 2009) and threatens subordinates’ resources related to workplace support.

In the stress literature, supervisors have been investigated as a potential source of support related to work (Halbesleben, 2006). Supportive supervisors can provide useful information at working such as figuring out work role ambiguity, giving directions to subordinate’s visions. On the contrary, abusive supervisors could produce any threat to valued resources noted in Hobfoll’s (2001) extensive list of COR resources such as “understanding from my employer/boss” and “status/security at work” (Harris, et al., 2007; Whitman, et al., 2012). Abused subordinates may refocus valued resources to withstand supervisor’s

threats and develop a defensive and sensitive posture to conserve remained resources. Moreover, abuse itself refers to a prolonged display of perceived dysfunctional supervisory behaviors and thus abused subordinates may experience a sustained threat of resources and subsequently chronic stress (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1993). In this way, the COR model extends beyond the notion of stress to help understand how employees react to their abusive supervisor and following results.

2. Abusive supervision and job performance

The current study follows the research stream reported in organizational behavior literature on abusive supervision in supervisor - subordinate dyads (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004; Zellars, et al., 2002).

Abusive supervision refers to “subordinates’ perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000). Examples of abusive behavior include supervisor demeaning, belittling, undermining, or invading the privacy of a subordinate. These behaviors reflect indifference, willed hostility (Tepper, 2000), and victimization (Tepper, 2007). Most previous studies suggested that supervisory abuse is a source of subordinates’ stress which results negative consequences, such as heightened psychological distress (Duffy, et al., 2002), decreased job satisfaction (Tepper, et al., 2004), and reduced the level of the performance of extra-role behavior (Zellars, et al., 2002). However, comparing to other outcomes, very few studies have examined the associations between abusive supervision and task performance. Ashforth (1997) found that abusive supervisory behavior is negatively related to work performance. Harris et al. (2007) showed that abusive supervision is negatively related to actual performance ratings from formal performance appraisals, as well as leader-rated performance.

To underlying the concept of abusive supervision as a potential workplace stressor helps explanation for the association between abusive supervision and task performance. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests the three ways in which individuals experience stress: (a) loss of resources, (b) threat to current resources, and (c) inadequate return on investments made to maximize resources (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). Supervisor's abusive behaviors could produce any of mentioned conditions, after then, resource depleted employees have trouble in doing their jobs and a negative impact on task performance (Harris, et al., 2007; Whitman, et al., 2012). Furthermore, Gilboa and colleagues (2008) did meta-analytic review that stress leads to decreased job performance because (a) it requires employees to focus physical effort and resources on dealing with the source of their stress instead of on job tasks, (b) it requires employees to spend cognitive resources on managing stress instead of on job tasks, and (c) stress leads to physiological reactions. The notion that abusive supervision serves as a workplace stressor is supported by empirical evidence, showing stress and abusive supervision both lead to similar outcomes (i.e., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; LePine et al., 2005; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004). By considering as a stressor, we argue that abusive supervision could threaten the loss of resources or produce actual loss. For instance, abusive supervisor regarded as burden for subordinates because leader may expect employees to expend time and energy to upward communication rather than doing their tasks. We can assume that having an abusive supervisor requires more extra resources rather than general type of supervisors in workplace and they may actively bring stressful situations such as threat of resources loss or making unreasonable demands.

Social Exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) is also helpful to understand the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance. SET argues that individuals "give approval, as a generalized reinforcer, to others who give them the activity they value, and so make it

more likely that others will go on giving the activity” (Homans, 1961, p. 129). This phenomenon is conceptualized as reciprocity, or repayment in kind. By having a number of interactions, both parties in the dyad will think about counterparts and then have some level of trust, respect, and obligation (Sin et al., 2009). We suggest that repeated interactions with abusive supervisor make relationships between supervisors and subordinates be poor and then get lower levels of relationship quality. Abused subordinates perceive mistreatment from leaders and then have negative reciprocity, where negative treatment is returned or repaid with negative treatment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, subordinates may repay to abusive supervisor by decreasing their task performance. Following the mentioned above, we hypothesize:

H1: Abusive supervision is negatively related to task performance.

3. Feedback seeking behavior

Ashford and Cummings (1983) defined feedback as individual resource that a subset of information available to individuals in their work environment. Feedback gives the opportunity to correct one's task itself and make the working process consistently. Proactive activities such as feedback seeking enhance individual achievement and also give competitive advantages. Feedback's effect on performance has been investigated since the early 1950s (Payne & Hauty, 1955). Chapanis (1964) said that its effect has recognized as the most dependable and studied frequently in psychology. Ammons (1956) mentioned in his review, feedback generally enhances both performance and motivation. Because of its performance enhancing effects, variety of literature have been interested in the concept of feedback. Some studies in education (Houten, Hill, & Parsons, 1975), multiple cue probability learning (Dudycha & Naylor, 1966), psychology (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979) are the instances. In the interpersonal realm,

feedback involves information about how their behaviors are perceived and evaluated by relevant others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Greller & Herold, 1975). Its information includes not only the evaluation of task but also reputation for individual themselves. That is to say, the feedback may pertain to both the appropriate behaviors to achieve a goal and how well an individual is enacting those behaviors as defined previously by Herold and Greller (1977).

Feedback seeking is regarded as conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end states (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). They defined feedback seeking behavior as the extent to which individuals (a) active tactic of inquiry, which involves direct verbal requests for performance evaluations and/or (b) more covert tactic of monitoring, which involves examining their environment for indirect feedback cues. Ashford and his colleagues (2003) summarized that employees seek feedback through monitoring and inquiry from their supervisors when they want to facilitate achievement of goals important to them (Ashford, 1989), when they need information to evaluate their own competence, and to increase their overall effectiveness (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Ashford & Tsui, 1991). In prior studies, Morrison (1993) found that newcomers' feedback seeking correlated positively with a longitudinal composite measure of job performance. Renn and Fedor (2001) also examined that feedback seeking and self-efficacy related to two dimensions of work performance (i.e., work quantity and work quality) through feedback-based goals.

4. Feedback seeking behavior as a moderator

As mentioned above, several findings show that feedback seeking offers the opportunities for improving performance as useful information. However, the feedback seeking behavior could be also considered as coping strategies. If abusive supervision represents a workplace stressor, then abused subordinates

may attempt to deal with that stress through the use of coping strategies. In this study, we focused on active coping's role which can be described as a process of problem solving in that it tends to concentrate on recognizing adversity and making direct attempts to overcome stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Researchers argue that active coping strategies tend to weaken the relationship between stress and negative outcomes by lowering the negative, main effects of stress (Koeske et al., 1993). Therefore, studies on coping suggest that active coping strategies adaptors should be more likely to regulate their behavioral and emotional responses to stressors. However, we thought that feedback seeking behavior might be not useful ways when in the face of abusive supervisor which is regarded as workplace stressor.

Active coping can consist of several coping strategies such as planful problem solving, direct confrontation with the source of the stress, positive reappraisal, and seeking social support (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Skinner et al., 2003). Seeking informational support such as feedback can be possible strategy to abusive supervisor. However, in the context of stressful interpersonal relations, keeping frequent interactions to seeking feedback from that unfavorable supervisor can be a counterproductive strategy because it may result in intensification of negative relationships and interpersonal conflict. Abusive supervisor may regard subordinates' seeking behavior as annoying or confrontive coping to alter present situation. Perceived confrontation by supervisor - especially involved in the low quality relationship in the context of abusive supervision- induces more aggressive circumstances (Dewe, O'Driscoll, & Cooper, 2010). Therefore, we suggest that high level of employees' feedback seeking behavior will escalate the negative effect of supervisor's abuse.

COR theory gives further explanation on moderating hypotheses. COR theory assumes that the loss of resources or the accumulation of stressful event would influence individual outcomes in negative ways (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001). When abusive supervision and feedback seeking behavior

are both high, the performance should suffer. Abusive supervisor behavior including public criticism (Tepper, 2000) and aggressive eye contact (Zellars, et al., 2002) may threaten employee's ego and fall the confidence to work (Singer, 1966). In this context, employees who choose an active coping strategy may deliver much more, proactive efforts related to accomplishing their work tasks with the purpose of reducing the extent to which their supervisor may have reasons to treat them unfairly (Nandkeoyar et al., 2013). As a result, employee expends substantial extra energy and effort that brings drain on their resources. The lack of resources will lower their ability to carry out their tasks which leads decreased levels of task performance.

H2: Subordinate's feedback seeking behavior moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance: The negative relationship is stronger when the feedback seeking behavior is high. Specifically, the lowest level of performance will occur when abusive supervision and subordinate's feedback seeking is both high.

III. Methodology

1. Data collection and samples

In order to test these hypotheses, the present study was conducted in various Korean companies that represent diverse industries, including manufacturing, construction design, telecommunications, and electronics. This survey design was intended to reduce the common method bias by separating responses for the outcome and predictor variables from workers and their supervisors.

Of the 300 full-time employees who received the questionnaire, 280 responded by providing "self-reports," resulting in a response rate of 93.3%. In a separate

questionnaire, the supervisor ratings were obtained for 268 of the 300 respondents in the sample. Overall, 268 pairs of matched responses were completed, for an overall response rate of 89.3%.

Of these final samples, the average age of the employees was 33.07 years. The sample included 35.8 percent of women and 64.2 percent of men. Education levels varied from a high school diploma to a doctoral degree; 4.5 percent of the respondents had completed only their high school degree; 82.4 percent had their bachelor's; 13.1 percent had their master's and doctorate.

2. Measures

Responses for all items were given on a seven-point scale ranging from 1(not at all) to 7(extremely), except for the demographic data.

1) Abusive supervision

It was assessed using a fourteen-item scale developed by Tepper (2000). Examples of the items are: "My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid", and "My supervisor blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment" ($\alpha = .92$).

2) Feedback-Seeking behavior

A seven-item scale developed by Ashford (1986) was used to measure Feedback-seeking behavior. Examples of the items are: "I observe what performance behaviors my boss rewards and use this as feedback on my own performance", and "I seek feedback from my supervisor about my work performance?" ($\alpha = .89$).

3) Task performance

In order to measure task performance, we used the seven-item scale developed by Williamson & Anderson (1991). The supervisors of the focal employees

indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with seven statements about the quality and quantity of the focal employee' task activities. Examples of the items are: "The subordinate meets formal performance requirements of the job", and "The subordinate engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation" ($\alpha = .94$).

4) Control variables

To reduce the likelihood of other variables affecting task performance, which would confound the relations examined, three demographic variables (age, gender, and education level) were controlled from the employees. Age was measured in years. Gender was dummy coded (1 = male and 2 = female), as was employee education level (1 = "high school," 2 = "junior college," 3 = "bachelor's," and 4 = "master's or higher degree").

IV. Results

1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

We conducted two sets of confirmatory factor analyses using AMOS 7 to compare the three-factor baseline model with two-factor model based on chi-square statistics and fit indices of CFI, IFI, and RMSEA (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Joreskog, 1993). The results showed that the hypothesized three-factor model of abusive supervision, feedback-seeking behavior, and supervisor-rated task performance, $\chi^2[345] = 953.57$, $p < .001$; CFI = .91, IFI = .90, RMSEA = .08, fitted to the data better than two-factor model ($\chi^2[346] = 1684.52$, $p < .001$; CFI = .80, IFI = .78, RMSEA = .12). Thus, there was good discriminant validity among the variables used in this study.

2. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, correlations, and scale reliability of the variables included in the study. As expected, abusive supervision appears to be negatively correlated to the outcome variable of task performance ($r = -.15, p < .05$). However, no significant zero-order correlations were found between feedback-seeking behavior and outcome variable ($r = .09, ns.$).

〈Table 1〉 Means, standard deviations, and inter-scale correlation

	Mean	S. D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	33.07	7.14					
2. Gender	1.36	.48	-.33***				
3. Education	2.96	.66	.07	-.15*			
4. Abusive supervision	2.12	.96	.08	-.04	.04		
5. Feedback-seeking behavior	3.90	.96	-.05	-.01	.06	-.05	
6. Task performance	4.48	.61	-.06	.10	.11	-.15*	.09

N= 268, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05.

3. Main and moderating effect

We conducted hierarchical regression analyses by entering the control and study variables into different steps of the equation to test hypotheses 1 and 2. In the first step, demographic variables were entered to control for relationships with abusive supervision, and task performance. In the second step, we included abusive supervision to test the hypothesized main effect on the outcome variable. As shown in table 2, abusive supervision was negatively related to task performance ($\beta = -.15, p < .05$), lending support to hypothesis 1. In hypotheses 2, we predicted that feedback-seeking behavior would moderate the relationships of abusive supervision and task performance. Step 3 in Table 4 reveals that feedback-seeking behavior negatively moderates abusive supervision on task performance ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$). The explained variance of the interaction

term was significant ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .05$).

<Table 2> Hierarchical regression examining the main and interactive effects on task performance

Variables	Task performance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variables				
Age	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.02
Gender	.10	.10	.10	.13
Education	.12	.13*	.12*	.12
Main effect				
Abusive supervision (AS)		-.15*	-.15*	-.18*
Moderating effect				
Feedback-seeking behavior (FSB)			.07	.06
AS * FSB				-.16*
R ²	.02	.04	.05	.07
R ² change		.02*	.01	.02*

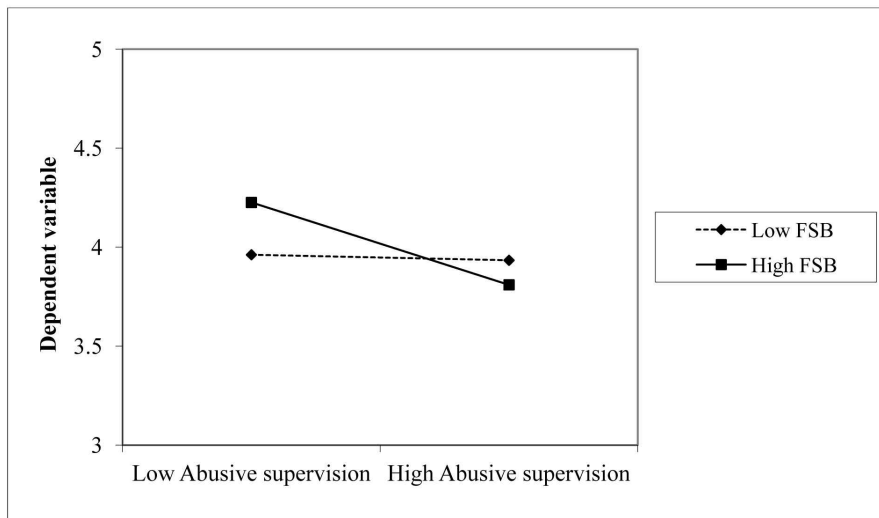
N = 268, employee-supervisor dyads.

R² change is incremental variance explained between each step.

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

To facilitate interpretation of the interaction effect, following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991), the interaction patterns were graphically examined by drawing the regression lines of the employees. As shown in Figure 1, the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance was stronger among employees who seek feedback more. Higher feedback-seeking behavior strengthens the negative relationship between abusive supervision and task performance. A simple slope test showed that when the feedback-seeking behavior was high, the negative relationship between abusive supervision

and task performance was significant ($\beta = -.21, p < .001$). When feedback-seeking behavior was low, the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance was not significant ($\beta = -.01, ns$). Hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported.



〈Figure 1〉 Interaction of abusive supervision and feedback-seeking behavior on task performance

V. Discussion

1. General discussion

In the present study, we examined the direct relationship between abusive supervision and task performance and how the subordinate's feedback seeking behavior moderated this relationship. We found that support for our hypothesis regarding a negative relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate's task performance rating by supervisor. Two possible models give some explanations

for our significant findings: social exchange theory and COR theory. In terms of COR theory, we investigate that the negative abusive supervision - task performance relationship may exist due to the threat that abusive behaviors pose to an employee's resources. Abuse creates a detrimental environment to work and promotes feelings loss of control in abused subordinates. To counter such threats, employees may draw effort and energy away from their job work and refocus it on managing upwards with abusive supervisory behaviors. Another possibility explanation from social exchange theory, employees may view the abusive behaviors by their supervisors as actions of their employing organizations (Schneider, 1987) and perceived the abuse as a mistreatment by organizations. Thus, they reciprocate negative treatment with low levels of job performance to repay an abusive supervision.

Our results also indicated that the moderating effects of feedback seeking behavior on the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance. The negative relationship between abuse by supervisor and performance was strongest for those employees reporting the high levels of feedback seeking behavior. Additionally, when the levels of feedback seeking behavior were low, the impact of abusive supervision on job performance was not significantly change. A possible explanation for these findings can be also found in the stems of COR theory. Shortly, when individuals choose their coping strategy as active, they heavily invest resources in their jobs. This means that compared to employees who use avoidant coping strategy, they are more susceptible to lose resources when interfaced with abusive supervisors. As abused subordinates choose more active coping strategy, they may be diverted away from their job task and towards addressing the abusive situation. Therefore, the work performance of employees who choose more active behavior strategy is likely to suffer. A possible explanation for these findings is that active type of coping strategy may not always be adaptive in the face of abusive supervision. It is noted as a hindrance stressor (as opposed to a challenge stressor) which

cannot be altered through external intervention (Nandkeolyar et al., 2013). Consistent with previous researches (Nandkeolyar et al., 2013), our results also show that active coping is not an effective technique for dealing with hindrance stressors.

2. Implications for theory and practice

Our study contributes to the leadership literature on abusive supervision. As Tepper (2007) said, the abusive supervision literature is written only by loose theoretical traditions and motivated more empirically driven than theory. With the current research, we can take a further step toward understanding the concept of abusive supervision theoretically and the contextual factors that abusive supervision might take place. Furthermore, conceptualizing abusive supervision as the potential workplace stressor may provide a fruitful basis for incorporating the other literature related to workplace victimization. Previous researches have used the terms such as *tyranny*, *supervisor undermining*, *bullying*, *incivility*, and *harassment* to describe hostile type of leader's behavior and construct which comparable to abusive supervision (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Tepper, 2007). Those constructs have similarities between them not only theoretical definition but also empirical relationships with others. Based on this, an important question has been raised by researchers: Are these, in fact, distinct constructs, or has construct proliferation crept into this literature (Aquino & Thau, 2009)? However, it may be the only problem when each of these constructs is an indicator of a single, higher order construct that captures the general nature of dysfunctional supervisory behaviors.

Unlike most studies on abusive supervision have been especially important given its prevalence in American workplaces, the current study is conducted in non-U.S workplaces. Previous studies said that persistent abuse at work is reported by 28 - 36% of US workers (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2005;

Neuman, 2004). There is no exact statistics about abuse behavior at work about Korean workers but we can expect more abusive supervision due to culture characteristics. Due to supervisors' high performance orientation, abusive behaviors have been shown to be relatively frequent in South Korea (Ashkanasy, 2002). Our findings may helpful to understand prevalent leadership style of South Korean supervisors and their business context.

This study also found that active coping style did not interact with abusive supervision to predict performance. Our findings consistent with previous research that mentioned no single coping strategy is inherently superior to another (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005) and an entire focuses on active coping does not always generate desirable outcomes. Indeed, as mentioned previously, past research has suggested that trying too hard to counteract uncontrollable adversities may be rather counterproductive (Terry & Hynes, 1998). Thus, even though active coping can more likely to regulate their behavioral and emotional responses in some stress circumstances (Koeske et al., 1993), too much enthusiasm like feedback seeking behaviors should be tempered given that the effectiveness of these strategies may be constrained in interaction with abusive supervisors.

We offer another practical implication of our results. The obvious implication is that because abusive supervision lowers the levels of employee performance, organizations should be try to reduce the possibility of abusive supervision appearance. Organizations may develop some policies and procedures to monitor the occurrences of abuse, report the performance of supervisors to ensure that supervisors engage in appropriate, healthy management behaviors when working with their employees. Managers themselves should be encouraged to engage in constant self-monitoring. Furthermore, all members should be ensured to be familiar with the reporting process and encouraged to have additional training about in the areas of emotional intelligence, anger management, or control strategies.

3. Limitations and directions for future research

There are a number of limitations of this research that must be considered. First, the data that collected for our study is cross-sectional. We collected that at one point in time. This research design prevents us from inferring causality. Future longitudinal studies might provide further evidence of these relationships. Second, measures of abusive supervision do not always capture actual supervisor behaviors. Consistent with previous studies, we measured supervisory behavior through employee perceptions. However, it is possible that individuals may perceive abusive supervision where none actually exists. One way to handle this limitation in future studies is for researchers to collect perceptions of abusive supervision from multiple sources, such as subordinates, subordinates' coworkers, and supervisors' peers (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). Third, the variable of feedback seeking that we used was not specific to the context of abusive supervision. Also, the relationship between feedback seeking behavior and coping strategy is equivocal, suggesting the need to further investigate those constructs together. The issue of measurement context can find the solution by applying the principle driven from previous meta-analysis (Shaffer & Postlethwaite, 2012). We argue that without being provided with a frame of reference that was specific to abusive supervision, respondents may have interpreted each coping item using a different source of stress as their reference point. Future researchers in this area may consider developing a coping measure that makes specific reference to how employees react to abusive supervision. Finally, we hope that future researchers will operationalize some of the processes mentioned in the current hypotheses and provide ample evidences for our ideas.

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리더의 비인격적 감독행위가 조직구성원의 업무성과에 미치는 영향: 피드백탐색행위의 조절작용

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요 약

본 연구는 리더의 비인격적 감독행위가 부하직원의 업무 성과에 미치는 영향에 관해 살펴 보았다. 리더의 비인격적 감독행위를 하나의 스트레스 요인으로 간주하여, 스트레스에 대응하기 위한 개인의 적극적인 대처 전략으로써 피드백탐색 행위가 어떠한 효과를 나타내 는지를 알아보고자 하였다. 이를 위하여 한국 기업들을 대상으로 설문을 이용하여 데이터를 수집하였다. 리더의 비인격적 감독에 대한 인식과 부하직원의 피드백탐색 행위는 부하 직원이, 부하직원의 업무 성과는 리더가 각각 측정하였다. 데이터분석은 우선 AMOS 프로 그램을 사용하여 해당 연구모형의 적합도를 파악하였으며, SPSS 프로그램을 이용하여 회 귀분석을 실시하였다. 연구결과, 리더의 비인격적 감독은 부하직원의 업무 성과에 부정적 인 영향을 미치며, 이 때의 적극적인 피드백탐색 행위는 오히려 비인격적 감독행위의 부정 적 영향을 강화시킴을 발견하였다.

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